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7 ANALYSIS OF THE EL TORO ARTIFACT "THE MASK" (M005): PART 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

ANALYSIS OF THE EL TORO ARTIFACT "THE MASK" (M005): PART 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

The Mask artifact (M005) was acquired in 2015 from Canadian collector Brett Gurloy, who reports that he acquired it from local artifact hunters during an expedition to the El Toro area.

Artifact size: 71x68x7 mm.

Weight – 68 grams.

Material: jasper with inserts (eyes) made of jade.



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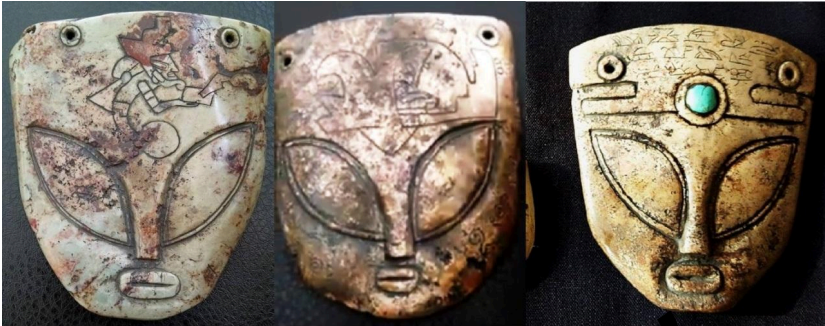


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Pic.01-02 Artifact "Mask" (M005)

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As the analysis showed, in terms of theme, style and manufacturing technique, the "Mask" artifact (M005) can be combined into a common typological group with other similar El Toro artifacts.



Pic. 3-11 El Toro's artifacts from the group "Masks"

A characteristic feature of many El Toro artifacts, including the analyzed mask, is the presence of a group of images and signs (symbols) on the artifact.



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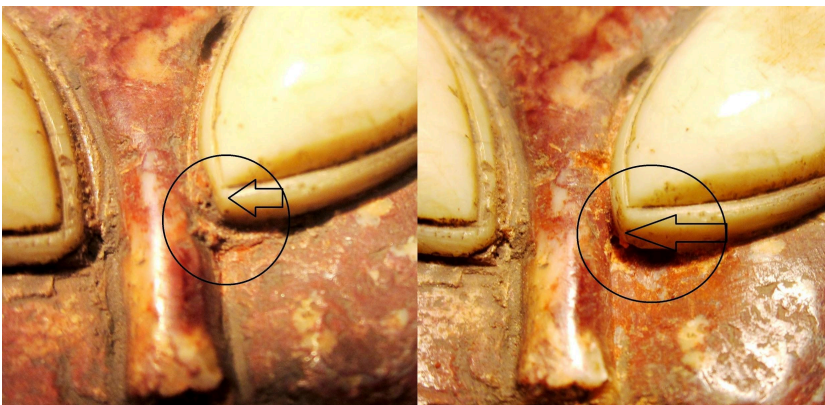


Pic.12 Individual images and signs carved on the "Mask" artifact (M005).

Part 2. Radiocarbon analysis of the Mask Artifact (M005)

Since a certain organic adhesive was used to bond the stones together during the manufacture of the artifact, it is obvious that radiocarbon dating of its samples can be used to determine its age. The age of the adhesive can be considered an important parameter in assessing the age of the artifact.

Photos 13-14 show the procedure for collecting a sample for analysis.



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Pic.13 Place of taking a glue sample "Before" and "After"

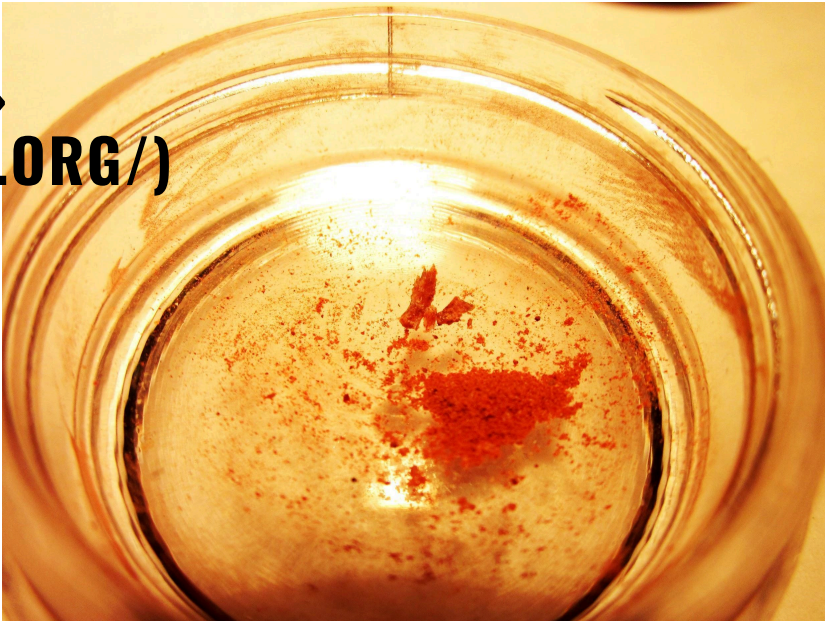
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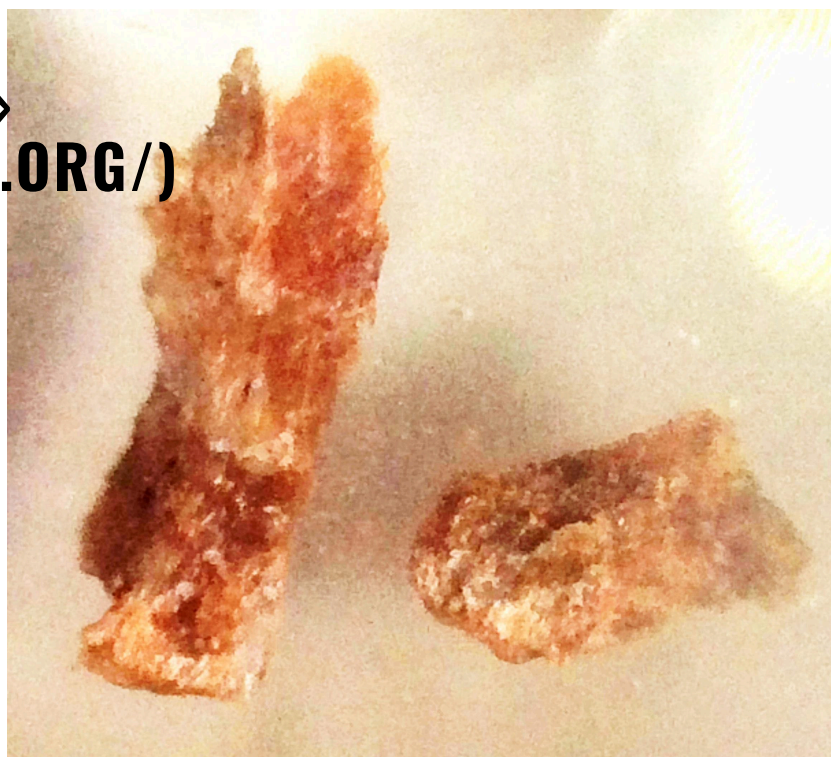


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Pic.14 Glue sample for testing

The samples for testing were sent to the reputable radiocarbon analysis laboratory of the University of Arizona (AMS Laboratory of the University of Arizona, Tucson, USA). The choice of this laboratory was due to the fact that, since 1981, it has accumulated significant experience in radiocarbon dating (more than 60 thousand tests), including in archeology, and also because it was in this laboratory that tests were carried out on the El Toro artifacts in 2012. The laboratory's activities are reflected in more than 500 scientific publications.

The laboratory report on the results of testing on the accelerator mass spectrometer was presented to the customer (our group) on May 25, 2016. See section Doc003 test2016 (http://staraztlan.org/documents/doc003_test2016/) .

According to the report, dating of the carbon isolated from the glue fragments using the ^{14}C isotope yielded a result of ~ **8.4 thousand years** .

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Next, a calibration program was used to calibrate the results, which increased the period to 7532-7354 BC (~ **9.4 thousand years**).

It is noteworthy that the results of this analysis are very close to the results of radiocarbon dating obtained in 2012 for sample No. 2 (Mask) in the "Klaus Dona" test (see section Doc002 test2012 Klaus Dona (http://staraztlan.org/documents/doc002_test2012_klaus_dona/)).

Test result, 2016 (not calibrated) – **8.4 thousand years**.

The 2012 test result (sample #2) is **8.7 thousand years**.

As already noted, the age of the adhesive can be used to estimate the age of the artifact. However, it is necessary to further determine the chemical composition of the glue, which will allow us to determine the nature of its organic matter - plant or animal.

Part 3. Microanalysis of the artifact "Mask" (M005)

Microanalysis of patina and carving on the stone was carried out using a digital microscope with 200x magnification. The main results of the analysis are as follows:

- no traces of machine processing were found on the artifact;
- individual areas of surface erosion of the stone were discovered, including the engraving grooves, which indicates that they may have appeared later than they were applied;
- there are microcracks on the artifact, the nature of which indicates that they probably appeared after the item was manufactured;
- individual mineral formations were found on the surface of the stone, also covering the engraved areas.

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Pic. 15 Fragments of the artifact "Mask" (M005) at multiple magnification

In our opinion, the results of microanalysis indirectly indicate the ancient age of the artifact. On the other hand, they should be considered preliminary, since a more in-depth study is required using a more powerful microscope and chemical analysis.

Learner

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OUR MEXICAN EXPEDITION FOUND THE FIRST ARTIFACT OF EL TOGO "AZTLAN"

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**A LABORATORY TEST ESTIMATED THE AGE OF OUR FIND AT 2.5
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